

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission



Chair
David O. Fakunle, Ph.D.

Vice Chair
Charles L. Chavis, Jr., Ph.D.

Staff
Sophie Asike, Esq.
Joy Ayomiposi Sarimakin
Zenita Hurley, Esq.
Kristin McFarlane, Esq.
Stephanie Thompson, PMP

Commissioners
David Armenti
Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D.
Simone Barrett-Williams, Ph.D.
Nicholas Creary, Ph.D.
Roger Davidson, Ph.D.
Maya Davis
Teisha Dupree-Wilson, Ph.D.
Omar Eaton-Martinez
Christopher E. Haley
Kirkland Hall, Sr., Ph.D.
Elizabeth Hughes
Izetta Mobley, Ph.D.
Carl Snowden
Marshall Stevenson, Ph.D.
Stephanie Suerth

Business Meeting Minutes – May 2023

Date: Monday, May 8th, 2023
Time: 11:39am-12:28pm Eastern Time
Location: Virtual

Attendance

Commissioners	
David Armenti	X
Iris Barnes	X
Simone Barrett-Williams	ABS
Charles Chavis	X
Nick Creary	X
Roger Davidson	X
Maya Davis	X
Teisha Dupree-Wilson	X
Omar Eaton-Martinez	ABS
David Fakunle	X
Chris Haley	X
Kirkland Hall	ABS
Elizabeth Hughes	ABS
Izetta Mobley	ABS
Carl Snowden	X
Marshall Stevenson	ABS
Stephanie Suerth	ABS
Staff	
Sophie Asike	X
Joy Sarimakin	X
Zenita Hurley	X
Kristin McFarlane	X
Stephanie Thompson	ABS

Members of the Public Present

Emily Oland Squires, Will Schwarz, Rev. Diane Teichert, Auset Reid.

Call to Order

Chair Fakunle called the meeting to order at 11:39am.

Approval of Minutes

The April 2023 business retreat minutes were accepted by the Commission.

Public & Chair's Comments

Chair Fakunle thanked all members of the public for their presence, time, commitment, and participation. He encouraged everyone to introduce themselves and affiliation in the comment section. He was grateful for the impact we have made and attention we are getting which have caused people to be interested in working with the commission, and apologies for any delay in getting back to all those who have applied or show their interest in working with the commission. He stated that the commission is trying to reimagine the commission work so that we are best utilizing all the talent we have in the commission.

Soul Check

Commissioner Armenti shares of his time at the Maryland history as a judge with history students with similar path as the commission. Chair Fakunle shared his appreciation for the commission and how much work has been done. Commissioner Creary said he heard that the California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans has completed their final report, to which he posted the link to the task force. He said he will be tracking down the final report as it will provide a model and be useful for the commission as they write their recommendations to the public and government. Commissioner Snowden stated that he and others met with Governor Moore on getting his support to build a memorial on the State House grounds for Parren J. Mitchell, the first Black person elected to Congress from Maryland, and Congressman Elijah Cummings. There is going to be a meeting to support this effort, about which he will let everyone know. Commissioner Haley reminded us that the thing to look at when we study lynching is considering how it happens today and the reasons that are giving to justify this act of horror and violence, such as the case of George kneelly. He encourages us to commemorate the individual by acting, reminding and counterpointing those things that are said to defend the act.

Logistics Committee Report

N/A

Research Committee Report

Commissioner Armenti reported that they did not get to meet last month due to scheduling, but he encourages commissioners, especially those teaching, to find time in late May or early June so they can meet. He shares that our collaborators from Heritage Associates are still having ongoing developments of case studies for genealogy connection and outreach to potential descendants. To that end, he asks the commission and OAG Office's opinion and/or strategy on outreach to descendants, and how there should be a distinction between lynching victims' potential descendants versus outreach to perpetrators' potential descendants or potential descendants of alleged victims of the racial terror lynching victims. Commissioner Armenti also asks to connect with other individuals either to build out more information or participation in public hearings. Additionally, he plans to reach out to the descendants and other individuals the commission previously worked with to reaffirm continued interest. Commissioner Snowden mentioned that there is someone named Charles Wood, who is a descendant of one of the confirmed lynching victims and said no one has contacted him, to which he provided his phone number. He also recommends doing outreach to potential descendants through media, and mentioned Tanya Black, a news director in Baltimore named who could potentially do a story on the commission's descendants search, WBOC and Channel 47 which covers the Eastern Shore.

Chair Fakunle said another thing that can help is to have a strong PR strategy, asks for commissioners who can help implement the strategy, and says he may rely on commissioner Snowden for that. Commissioner Snowden suggests that we should take advantage of lynching victims' anniversaries to educate people on what the commission does, to which Chair Fakunle agrees that there is need to re-sensitize the people on the injustice of violence. Commissioner Creary reminded the commission that next Friday, May 19th is the anniversary of Malcolm X, but his death is not remembered. He also says the commission should be doing outreach through Morgan State University about lynching victims' descendants and the commission's work in general. Dr. Fakunle said our problem is not the strategy but the implementation of the strategy and resources that we have, and since we all know that he encourages us to do better. Commissioner Davidson talked about making sure the media shows the relevance of the past and what is happening currently in communities so that people can better understand the importance and impact of

racial terror lynchings. Dr. Fakunle affirms that the commission and media can serve as warning of not just what is happening but how it can be combated by the public, and that people need to know that racial terror lynching is just one form of racial terrorism.

Reconciliation & Justice Committee

Commissioner Creary said he has been going through transcripts to match them up with videos for accuracy, and he apologizes to Zenita for the delay. Zenita appreciates him and Commissioner Armenti for the work they have been doing, and that she has received some transcripts that she will be sending over so they can finalize the editing before they are sent for publication online.

New Business

Chair Fakunle introduces Sophie Asike, who will be helping as with commission management pending a permanent PM replacement at which time, the commission shall move to schedule hearing sessions for 2023. Joy reminded Dr. Fakunle about some issues with subpoenaing for missing documents and payment for document scanning and photocopying, but since Vice-Chair Chavis was unavailable at the time it was agreed to table the discussion.

Zenita said she will be circulating the information for a full-time project manager position while trying to secure additional funding, because she thinks the position being a part-time opportunity is why there has been difficulty getting applicants.

Announcements

Emily Squires shared that the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project's annual conference will be held on October 14, 2023, at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum.

The Frederick Remembrance Memorial project will be holding a soil collection on Saturday, May 13th at 2:00pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was closed to the public at 12:28pm. Dr. Fakunle moved for the adjournment to discuss and vote on the at-large commissioner position and was seconded by Commissioners Creary and Davidson.